

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A marine craft, comprising: an open hull portion at the stern of said craft, a well deck hingedly connected at one end thereof to the hull adjacent said open hull portion, and means for selectively raising and lowering a stern end of said well deck about said one end, said one end being generally opposite said stern end, said open hull portion defined by a pair of spaced apart buoyant structures extending rearwardly from opposite lateral sides of the bow of said craft, said well deck further comprising an exterior bottom that is substantially aligned with the exterior surface of the hull when said well deck is in a raised position and a stern gate hingedly secured to said stern end, said well deck configured to receive and support cargo therein.
2. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said well deck further comprises a substantially upwardly facing bottom surface, said one end and said stern end being connected via laterally opposite sides, and upstanding walls extending from said one end and each of said laterally opposite sides.
3. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said means for selectively raising and lowering said stern end comprises at least one hydraulic or pneumatic cylinder extending between an overhead support and said well deck, said overhead support extending between said pair of buoyant structures.
4. The marine craft of Claim 3 wherein said overhead support further comprises first and second upright portions and a structural bridge extending between said upright portions, said first upright portion extending substantially

upwardly from one of said pair of buoyant structures, said second upright portion extending substantially upwardly from the other of said pair of buoyant structures, said means further comprising at least two of said cylinders, each said cylinder having an upper end and a lower end, said upper end of one of said cylinders being connected to said structural bridge substantially adjacent said first upright portion, said upper end of another of said cylinders being connected to said structural bridge substantially adjacent said second upright portion.

5. The marine craft of Claim 4 wherein said lower ends are respectively connected to said well deck at laterally opposite sides thereof that connect said one end and said stern end.

6. The marine craft of Claim 4 wherein said lower ends are respectively connected to said well deck at upper edges of upstanding walls extending from laterally opposite sides of said well deck.

7. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said well deck further comprises a cradle having damped flexible mounts, said cradle configured to mitigate shock loads exerted upon cargo received within said well deck during high-speed or turbulent transit of said craft.

8. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said stern gate is configured to be selectively raised and lowered about said stern end for selectively opening and closing access of cargo into and out of said well deck.

9. The marine craft of Claim 1 further comprising a winch apparatus mounted to a forward portion of said craft adjacent said open hull portion, said

winch apparatus comprising a retractable cable having connection means at a distal end thereof for selectively retrieving and deploying cargo to and from said well deck and for securing said cargo within said well deck during transit of said craft.

10. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said well deck further comprises a releasable fastening means for securing cargo received within said well deck.

11. The marine craft of Claim 1 further comprising a cover releasably secured to said craft and extending over said open hull portion, said cover selected from the group of covers consisting of soft tops, canvas, and tarps.

12. The marine craft of Claim 1 further comprising a cabin and a fore deck configured about the bow of said craft, said cabin being forward of said open hull portion.

13. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said craft is manufactured substantially from at least one of the materials selected from the group of materials consisting of fiberglass and aluminum.

14. The marine craft of Claim 1 further comprising at least one engine secured within the hull of said craft, each said engine coupled to at least one jet drive.

15. The marine craft of Claim 14 wherein each said engine comprises a 6-cylinder in-line diesel engine rated at about 420 bhp.

16. The marine craft of Claim 15 further comprising a fuel capacity of about 1,000 gallons and a cruising range of about 500 nautical miles.

17. The marine craft of Claim 14 wherein said craft is configured for high-speed transit in a body of water.

18. The marine craft of Claim 17 wherein said craft has a maximum speed of about 26 knots.

19. The marine craft of Claim 14 wherein at least one engine is secured within each said buoyant structure, each said buoyant structure further comprising a jet drive extending substantially rearward.

20. The marine craft of Claim 1 wherein said cargo comprises a distinct marine vessel.

21. The marine craft of Claim 20 wherein said marine vessel is selectively navigable as a submersible vessel.

22. The marine craft of Claim 21 wherein said marine vessel comprises a Dolphin Class swimmer delivery vehicle.

23. A marine craft, comprising: an open hull portion at the stern of said craft, a well deck hingedly connected at one end thereof to the hull adjacent said open hull portion, and means for selectively raising and lowering a stern end of said well deck about said one end, said one end being generally opposite said stern end, said open hull portion defined by a pair of spaced apart buoyant structures extending rearwardly from opposite lateral sides of the bow of said craft, said well deck further comprising an exterior bottom that is substantially

aligned with the exterior surface of the hull when said well deck is in a raised position and a stern gate hingedly secured to said stern end, said well deck configured to receive and support cargo therein, said well deck further comprising a substantially upwardly facing bottom surface, laterally opposite sides connecting said one end and said stern end, and upstanding walls extending from said one end and each of said laterally opposite sides, said means for selectively raising and lowering said stern end comprising at least two hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders extending between an overhead support and said well deck, said overhead support extending between said pair of buoyant structures and comprising first and second upright portions and a structural bridge extending between said upright portions, said first upright portion extending substantially upwardly from one of said pair of buoyant structures, said second upright portion extending substantially upwardly from the other of said pair of buoyant structures, each said cylinder having an upper end and a lower end, said upper end of one of said cylinders being connected to said structural bridge substantially adjacent said first upright portion, said upper end of another of said cylinders being connected to said structural bridge substantially adjacent said second upright portion, said craft further comprising at least one engine secured within the hull of said craft, each said engine coupled to at least one jet drive and comprising a 6-cylinder in-line diesel engine rated at about 420 bhp having a fuel capacity of about 1,000 gallons, a cruising range of about 500 nautical miles and a maximum speed of about 26 knots, at least one said engine being secured within each said buoyant

structure, each said buoyant structure further comprising a jet drive extending substantially rearward.

24. The marine craft of Claim 23 wherein said cargo comprises a Dolphin Class swimmer delivery vehicle.